



## **CITY OF MENIFEE**

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SUBJECT: First Reading and Introduction of an Ordinance Adopting the Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps

MEETING DATE: June 4, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: Sonya Rivera-Bu, Fire Marshal

REVIEWED BY: Rebekah Kramer, Deputy City Manager

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

1. Introduce an ordinance to adopt the Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps in the Local Responsibility Areas for the City of Meniffee.

### **DISCUSSION**

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) arose from major destructive fires across California, prompting the recognition of these areas and identifying strategies to reduce wildfire risk. Government Code Sections 51178-51179 assigns responsibility to the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to classify lands statewide into FHSZ that are Moderate, High, or Very High. These classifications are determined using factors such as vegetation or fuel loading, terrain, fire weather conditions, historical fire activity, ember production and movement, and wind patterns where wind has been identified as a major cause of wildfire spread. FHSZ are based on the likelihood of a fire occurring in these areas and its expected behavior over a 30- to 50-year period under existing conditions.

In response to the San Bernadino Panorama Fire in 1980, the State implemented California Public Resource Code 4201-4204 which mandated the creation of FHSZ for the State Responsibility Area (SRA). The SRA identifies the land areas in which the State is required to suppress and prevent all unwanted fire. The first SRA map was published in 1985. FHSZ classifications in the Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) were established with Assembly Bill (AB) 337 in 1992 after the Alameda County Tunnel Fire in 1991. The LRA map identifies land areas where the local government is responsible to mitigate and prevent wildfires. In 2011, CAL FIRE completed the Very High FHSZ within the LRA map that encompassed 38 counties and nearly 200 cities. During this time, local governments were able to adopt the LRA maps as recommended or adjust the recommendation to be more or less restrictive.

In 2021, Senate Bill (SB) 63 expanded the scope of the FHSZ classifications by mandating the identification of additional zones, including Moderate and High FHSZ, to the Very High FHSZ. In 2022, AB 211, as codified in Government Code section 51179, reinforced these mandates and required local agencies to formally designate, by ordinance, all three classifications within 120 days of receiving the recommendations from the OSFM. The bill also eliminated the local governments' ability to downgrade the hazard levels recommended by the OSFM.

Previously, the FHSZ maps were adopted as part of the Fire Code (City of Menifee Municipal Code Chapter 8.20). However, current legislation requires a separate ordinance to adopt the updated LRA maps. Government Code Section 51178 requires local agencies to engage in a transparent and participatory process to ensure that affected communities have access to updated wildfire hazard information.

Furthermore, local agencies are now required to:

1. Within 30 days of the release of the LRA map, make the information available for public review and comment. The updated LRA map for the City of Menifee was released on March 24, 2025 and can be viewed on the City's website: <https://www.cityofmenifee.us/1088/Fire-Maps> as well as the OSFM website: <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones>.
2. AB 211 requires a local agency to designate, by ordinance, Moderate and High FHSZ within 120 days of the release of the LRA map and adopt the recommended map.
3. Within 30 days of local ordinance adoption, the City of Menifee is required to submit a copy of the ordinance to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

It is important to note that while the public review and comment period is required by the State, the City of Menifee has no authority to modify the designations established by the OSFM.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE**

Safe and Vibrant Community

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Ordinance
2. Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map
3. State Minimum Requirements
4. Public Comment